ALL ABOARD

With G. E. Mortimore

WHY shouldn't we have government sweepstakes?

I believe that the arguments against them are full of holes.

Some pious people get so excited about protecting the world from evil that they use dishonest methods to support their cause.

A number of churchgoers are firmly convinced that gambling is bad for the character. They oppose sweepstakes. They are entitled to their opinion.

But they are not entitled to mislead the public with inaccurate statements.

Some zealous campaigner against gambling informed Victoria Ministerial Association that Irish Sweeps return only 15 to 18 per cent of their proceeds to hospitals.

* * *

In fact, hospitals take 25 per cent; 50 per cent goes out in prizes; and 25 per cent goes to expenses and dividends to the promoters.

A. P. Rainey pointed this out in a letter to The Colonist.

The current Reader's Digest contains the same information. James Stewart-Gordon tells us in the Digest that the Irish Sweeps have taken in $400,000,000 during their 30-year history.

Of this sum, $200,000,000 went to prizewinners; $100,000,000 to hospitals; and $100,000,000 in expenses and dividends to promoters.

* * *

Yet someone has convinced the ministerial association that only 15 to 18 per cent of proceeds—at the most, $62,000,000—went to the hospitals.

That's a difference of $28,000,000—quite a large sum to forget about, even for a good cause.

* * *

Sad to say, the Reader's Digest itself is guilty of slanted reporting in the same article.

"While doctors and hospital men are reluctant to assay one country's hospitals against another's, the impression among the International Hospital Federation men appears to be that, although there's nothing wrong with Ireland's hospitals, other countries which have not used lotteries have done just about as well . . ."

What other countries? Were they rich or poor countries? What were their hospitals like 30 years ago? How rapidly have their hospitals been built and improved, in contrast to Ireland's?

* * *

I have heard that Ireland has built and modernized its hospitals at a spectacular rate since the sweepstakes began; and that Ireland's hospitals are hard to match anywhere. I don't know these things for sure.

But in 1956 Irish Hospitals Commission invited representatives of the IHF, an organization that includes some of the world's leading hospital administrators, to tour Ireland's hospitals. The commission must have felt that the hospitals were good, or the invitation would never have been issued.

Ireland is a fairly poor nation. It wouldn't have as much money to spend on hospitals as, say, the United States. How do Ireland's hospitals stack up against those of other countries in the same economic bracket? That's what we really want to know. And that is what the Reader's Digest article fails to tell us.

The statement that "other countries which have not used lotteries have done just about as well" is meaningless, and yet misleading.

British Columbia has a hospitalization plan, which takes the load off the individual citizen's back. But many of the hospitals are in trouble, and need money for new buildings and for running expenses.

And in regions where no hospital plan exists, many people just can't afford treatment. As a result, they don't get medical and hospital care when they should, and some of them die as a result.

How do you put that in a balance sheet?

* * *

Until I read Mr. Stewart-Gordon's article, I didn't know that the Irish Sweeps were run by a private company. A major stockholder, Joseph McGrath, one of the co-founders of the sweepstake, has taken enough profits out of the sweep to be a millionaire.

In spite of the vast amount that goes to promoters in the Irish Sweeps, hospitals have gained $100,000,000 from it.

A Canadian state hospital sweep could be run much more cheaply.

* * *

Sweepstakes are a painless form of taxation. And they are only a mild sort of gambling. I never yet heard of anyone spending the grocery money on sweepstake tickets.

A person who is unbalanced enough to do that would probably lose the money at poker, dice or racetrack betting, if he couldn't buy sweep tickets.

The anti-gambling people feel that if hospitals are paid for by sweeps, the spirit of charity will die. There is no reason why it should. Plenty of other good causes beside hospitals exist: housing for elderly people; half-starved people in Asia and in refugee camps.

For that matter, sweepstakes can be run to augment general revenue, rather than the hospitals. Sums of money from general revenue could then be set aside for hospital use.

Puritans forecast trouble when Britain started issuing lottery bonds, with prizes instead of interest. But the bonds are still raking in pounds and dollars for the treasury, and no thunderbolt has come down from Heaven so far.

Park Playmates

Spring is bringing the animal lovers in Greater Victoria to Beacon Hill Park, as usual, and here are some of the new arrivals in the big animal life section. Trio of an ewe and her two lambs, above, donated by John Turner of Sayward, is a big attraction to wool-gathering crowds. English spotted rabbits at left, donated by A. J. Ingram, Old West Road, are a sure bet to entrance the many youthful visitors. Caretaker is Sandy Hayton.—(Colonist photos)

Haste Makes Waste

One of Canada's leading consulting engineers, at the request of the Shrum royal commission, yesterday offered some pithy advice on minimizing risk of over-spending on power projects.

Harold E. Barnett said that, if necessary, a year should be taken to gather information before preparing final drawings.

"This is the sensible way," he told the commission. "But no one will ever do it, because the delay could save money on the contract but it would mean the owner (utility) will lose money on the sale of electricity."

OVER-EXPENDITURE

Mr. Barnett spoke as the hearings dealt with over-expenditure of about $16,000,000 on the B.C. Power Commission Strathcona development.

He is executive vice-president of H. G. Acres, consulting engineers for the project.

Earlier, power commission acting general manager R. C. McMordie told the commission the "basic source of cost discrepancies" on the Strathcona development was lack of lead time, the time available to carry out preliminary investigations and forecast changes.

EMPHASIZES FACT

He said the power commission "must also emphasize the fact that errors of judgment did not contribute to the dimensions of the end cost" of $35,000,000.

There were so many "unavoidable changes," many resulting from discovery that rock in the area made poor foundations, said Mr. Barnett, that it was necessary to release the general contractors from quoted unit prices and introduce a cost-plus basis of payment.

Mr. McMordie added: "Unforeseen conditions, essential modifications, vagaries of nature, strikes, fires and accidents all had to be met as they arose."

The Inner Secret of Health!

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Ship Calendar

NAVY

HMCS Sussexvale, Beacon Hill, Antigonish and St. Therese, return 10.30 a.m. May 1; New Waterford returns Saturday or Sunday; Kootenay returns this morning.

Khrushchev Man to See

WASHINGTON (CP)—President Eisenhower Wednesday modified his summit approach to the extent of conceding that the West must negotiate directly with Nikita Khrushchev if it hopes to reach any valid agreement with the Soviet Union.

But he said he wanted to make it clear the Russians could not blackmail, bluff or command attendance.

In Paris, President de Gaulle Wednesday rejected any policy of disengagement in central Europe and said he was prepared to attend a summit conference provided the preliminary foreign ministers parley "produced elements of an agreement."

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Weather Forecast

March 26, 1959

Variable cloudiness, clearing during the afternoon. A few showers overnight. Little change in temperature. Winds southeast 25, shifting to southwest 30 early in the morning. Wednesday precipitation, .03 inch. Sunshine, two hours. Friday outlook: showers late in the day.

Recorded Temperatures

High 59 Low 42

Forecast Temperatures

High 50 Low 40

Sunrise 6.06 Sunset 6.35

East Coast of Vancouver Island — Variable cloudiness, clearing during the evening. Little change in temperature. Winds westerly 20 during the morning. High and low at Nanaimo, 50 and 40. Friday outlook: showers late in the day.

West Coast of Vancouver Island — Variable cloudiness with widely scattered showers. Little change in temperature. Winds westerly 25 decreasing to 15 in the morning. High and low at Estevan Point, 48 and 40. Friday outlook: showers.

TEMPERATURES

	Min.	Max.	Pre.
St. John's	17	30	.03
Halifax	18	45	
Montreal	24	38	--
Ottawa	27	43	
Toronto	31	38	.04
North Bay	27	37	--
Port Arthur	17	47	--
Kenora	25	43	--
Winnipeg	22	37	--
Brandon	26	43	--
The Pas	12	43	--
Regina	21	47	--
Saskatoon	27	50	--
Prince Albert	9	45	--
North Battleford	24	48	--
Swift Current	25	47	--
Medicine Hat	31	55	--
Lethbridge	26	54	--
Calgary	19	51	--
Edmonton	28	51	--
Kimberley	28	52	--
Crescent Valley	32	51	--
Kaslo	30	50	--
Grand Forks	28	55	--
Kamloops	35	58	
Penticton	29	56	
Vancouver	44	49	.21
Victoria	42	50	.03
Prince Rupert	42	46	.03
Prince George	24	43	.03
Whitehorse	7	34	--
Seattle	38	49	.17
Portland	38	48	.68
Spokane	32	37	
Chicago	28	45	.06
New York	41	50	--

TIDES AT VICTORIA
(Pacific Standard Time)

	Time H.M.	Ht. Ft.	Time H.M.	Ht. Ft.	Time H.M.	Ht. Ft.	Time H.M.	Ht. Ft.
26	02.36	8.6	10.10	2.8	16.23	7.4	22.07	5.0
27	04.05	8.7	10.59	2.3	17.32	7.2	22.49	5.7
28	04.4[illegible]	8.7	11.53	2.1	19.46	7.1	23.36	6.4
29	05.26	8.6	12.46	2.0	21.48	7.3		
30	00.26	6.9	06.00	8.4	13.45	2.1	28.00	7.5
31	01.30	7.4	06.44	8.1	14.48	2.2		
April								
1	00.11	7.7	08.13	7.3	07.52	7.7	15.54	2.7
2	01.11	7.[illegible]	09.09	7.1	09.33	7.3	16.58	3.1
3	01.54	7.7	06.07	6.5	10.55	7.2	17.54	3.3
4	02.05	7.5	06.53	6.0	12.01	7.1	18.42	3.7
5	01.32	7.6	07.32	5.2	13.00	7.0	19.26	4.1
6	01.46	7.7	08.08	4.5	13.53	7.0	20.05	4.5

TIDES AT FULFORD HARBOUR
(Pacific Standard Time)

	Time H.M.	Ht. Ft.	Time H.M.	Ht. Ft.	Time H.M.	Ht. Ft.	Time H.M.	Ht. Ft.
26	05.34	11.2	12.01	3.6	18.48	10.5		
27	00.08	6.5	06.05	11.1	12.46	3.0	19.54	10.6
28	00.59	[illegible]	06.40	11.0	13.36	2.7	21.03	10.6
29	01.51	8.1	07.16	10.7	14.28	2.6	22.17	10.3
30	02.06	8.7	07.37	10.2	15.25	2.8	23.45	10.0
31	04.39	8.8	08.50	9.8	16.28	3.2		
Apr.								
1	00.47	10.[illegible]	06.19	8.6	09.58	9.2	17.34	3.5
2	01.45	10.7	07.35	8.1	11.32	8.9	18.40	3.9
3	02.31	10.7	08.30	7.4	13.06	8.7	19.40	4.3
4	03.07	10.6	09.10	6.7	14.37	8.9	20.34	4.7
5	03.39	10.5	09.45	6.0	15.32	9.1	21.21	5.2
6	04.08	10.3	10.17	5.3	16.30	9.4	22.04	5.7